



ADVANCING HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND CARE

BACKGROUND

East African transport corridors, particularly highways, are economic lifelines but also major routes for HIV transmission. Fifty percent of the population along regional transport corridors is transient and impoverished. Poor health indicators correlate with being underserved by the formal health system. A recent study revealed that unemployment levels along these corridors approaches 70 percent. In some communities, 78 percent of females have turned to commercial sex work for a livelihood; HIV prevalence among truck drivers was twice as high as in the general population. Another study along the Trans-Africa Highway estimated HIV prevalence at 20 percent for truckers and 56 percent for their female partners, underscoring critical gender dimensions of HIV transmission.

To serve these underserved communities, the Regional Outreach Addressing AIDS through Development Strategies (ROADS) Project began in 2005 with support from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and USAID. The USAID/East Africa (USAID/EA) Office of Regional Health and HIV/AIDS currently implements the Roads to a Healthy Future (ROADS II) project in partnership with FHI 360, and works in close collaboration with African leadership in East, Central and Southern Africa.

The program currently focuses on HIV and broader health and development challenges in border communities and along major transport corridors spanning eight countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia). The project links vulnerable communities and mobile populations in these underserved areas to state-of-the-art practices and develops innovations in HIV-Aids service delivery. The ROADS II project is supporting the region to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) related to HIV/AIDS; supports PEPFAR's targets of preventing new HIV Infections; and adheres to key principles of the Global Health Initiative, including emphasis on women and girls and supporting increased country ownership. Partnership with private sector entrepreneurs and business leaders contributes to financial support, sustainability and leadership know-how.

IMPACT: ROADS II reaches approximately 4 million people (including 300,000 truck drivers) who live in or travel through highway towns. Results to date include:

- Supporting over two dozen branded, cost-effective resource centers ("SafeTStops") that offer education, HIV counseling and testing, and a safe place for recreation for truck drivers and other transient workers.
- The innovative *Lifeworks* initiative – which harnesses human and financial resources of the private sector in the fight against HIV/AIDS - has created economic opportunities for 3,500 vulnerable women, older orphans and care providers as part of HIV prevention and care strategy.
- ROADS II has increased the competence of 30,900 frontline HIV and 440 family planning service providers.
- It has provided the stimulus to develop regional policies that address critical but often ignored issues of alcohol abuse and gender-based violence in the context of HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.



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- The project has supported community-based alcohol counseling to enhance adherence to antiretroviral therapy and prevent HIV infection or reinfection to 4,000 individuals in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.
- ROADS II has supported the training of 600 private pharmacists and drug shop staff in palliative care, anti-retroviral therapy counseling and referral as the first line of care for many; and an additional 82 staff in family planning.
- The project has supported the development of a Global Development Alliance between the Government of the Republic of Djibouti, Dubai Ports World and USAID and ROADS II; this public-private partnership is planned to expand to port communities in Mozambique and Senegal.